The Southern PATRIOT

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N.O. INTEGRATION PETITION PROVES DECENCY'S STRENGTH

On September 12 a petition signed by 180 citizens of New Orleans challenged the truculent, stalling attitude of the city school board toward integration. The document, which requested the board to lay immediate plans for ending Jim Crow, reveals the growing strength of democratic sentiment in the South, even the Deep South. It is of historical significance.

Signers of the petition represented the largest interracial group yet to file such a plea in a Southern city. Leaders of all religious faiths—Catholic, Jewish, Protestant — signed. Educators, newspapermen, lawyers, parent-teachers officials, priests, ministers, rabbis were among them. Their names were among those distinguished in New Orleans and nationally for social, civic, and professional achievement.

Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman, SCEF board member, led the committee of seven who presented the petition at a school board meeting. The others were: Mrs. Charles Keller, Jr., Mrs. Gustaf R. Westfeld, Jr., Mrs. Fred Zengel, the Rev. Albert D'Orlando, the Rev. Robert Hill, the Rev. John Winn, Jr.

In his remarks at the meeting Rabbi Feibelman cited specific pro-segregation steps taken by the board, disputed their validity, and warned of their harmful implications. He declared, in part:

"There has appeared in the local press a report that the school board has engaged an attorney at a stipulated compensation of $25,000 per annum and $150 per diem if the attorney must function out of the city, for the specific purpose of defending the school board in its position on segregation.

"Some of us feel that this is a usage of the taxpayers' money designated to circumvent and defy the law. . . . In this sense it would appear to be a mis-usage of public money.

"Our primary purpose, however, is to urge you gentlemen of the school board to face the issue of segregation in a more realistic sense than that which would specifically imply your determination to defy it or to ignore both its existence and its validity. . . .

"We have all seen what has happened in the state of Mississippi, where men stubbornly refused to believe that the world has moved forward and that all children, black and white, are the children of God. The entire nation has been aroused by the wanton act of disregard for law and order. . . .

"We are chagrined to call attention to the fact that children applying for admission into our schools in New Orleans today must present a notarized statement that they are white. This would hardly appear, in the light of the proud history of public education, which is one of the keystones in the American Republic, to be consistent with a democratic spirit or even of a humane policy. . . ."

The petition pointed out the clarity of the Supreme Court rulings, and "the widespread disappointment . . . of law-abiding citizens" at the school board's negative attitude.

"The basic fact is, segregation now is legally wrong. In addition to this, and not less important, segregation is morally wrong. It offends, if not actually defiles, basic ethical and religious teachings of the major religious bodies. . . ."

The petition listed the Southern cities where integration is now in effect or is being contemplated, and said: "In the light of these examples, as well as in consideration of the ethical, spiritual and legal principles involved, we respectfully urge the members of the Orleans Parish Board of Education to consider their position of trust carefully and to honor the laws of the United States.

"We beg the school board to instruct the superintendent of schools and his staff to study the local scene immediately with the purpose in mind of drafting a plan by which integration or desegregation in the schools of Orleans Parish may go forward as soon as possible."

The petition was immediately sniped at by the racist fringe. The "Citizens Council of New Orleans" announced it was going to present its own pro-segregation petition, and the president of the "American Society for the Preservation of State Government and Racial Integrity, Louisiana Division," one Harry P. Gamble, Sr., issued an outraged press release.

But its impact on the conservative members of the community, and the heartening expression it gave to the sentiments of thousands of Negroes and whites alike cannot be disputed.

Furthermore, at a time when the South as a whole bears the shameful stain of Emmett Till's blood, the petition should be considered by the region's critics as a token of the decency that exists and that will eventually prevail over the decadent doctrines of brutality. It should be considered by Southerners in other cities as an example of the practical steps they, too, can take to hasten the day of decency's triumph.

Mississippi: Many Share the Guilt

The murder of young Emmett Till dramatized for the nation the perversion of governmental process now taking place in Mississippi. But perhaps **reversion** is a better word than perversion.

Because what essentially is happening is that the Delta land barons, their lackeys like Senator Eastland, and the others with a vested interest in segregation are using the Supreme Court decision to fan hysteria and stampede the populace into a retreat from the democratic gains of recent years.

When registered Negro voters are denied the right to exercise their franchise —as occurred with official sanction at the last state primary—it should be remembered that Negro voting is a very recent and tenuous thing in allegedly 20th century Mississippi. This repression did not spring from the schools ruling—Willie McGee, to cite one publicized incident, was electrocuted long before that. The repression springs from the continued economic and political power of men and institutions whose methods of gaining and retaining power are winked at by the federal government, the major political parties, and the news and opinion-forming media of the nation generally.

As bitter as it may sound, there seems little reason to doubt that if a Mississippi boy, and not a Chicago boy, had been the victim of the outrage, the incident would not have gained notice beyond the state borders and very little notice within. It ill behooves the national press to suddenly discover the state of affairs in Tallahatchie County,

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SMEAR REPORT ON SCEF ROUSES BOLD COUNTERATTACK

After distributing copies to its American Legion "Americanism" playmates while denying them to the taxpaying public, the staff of Senate Internal Security Subcommittee finally released the Eastland report on the SCEF last month.

It was as quoted in the "sneak preview" published in September's **Patriot**: The SCEF is held suspect for its historical association with the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and Attorney General Brownell is urged to hale the organization before the Subversive Activities Control Board for trial on charges of being a Communist front.

Not a single activity, project, or declaration by the SCEF is cited. The charge is based on slurs cast against the Southern Conference for Human Welfare by the incredible and infamous professional informer Paul Crouch and a report on the SCHW by the House Un-American Activities Committee which was mocked and discredited by the nation's press the day it was issued in 1947 and which has grown even more malodorous with age.

SCEF President Aubrey Williams and Director James A. Drombrowski gave statements to the press that pointed out the gross error of the report which grew from the two-day inquisition conducted by the arch-Dixiecrat Senator Eastland of Mississippi.

On the same day as the release of the report—September 12—the national commander of the American Legion, Seaborn P. Collins, issued a blast at the Fund for the Republic for its recent sponsorship of civil-liberties projects. And the Senate committee "appeared to be preparing to investigate" it, according to the New York **Times**.

Collins' statement was given for release to morning papers, the SCEF report for afternoon papers—much as if the Legion and the committee shared the same press agent, and he was doling out the stories for maximum effect.

Although the SCEF report caused little immediate stir in the press—many Southern papers ignored the story—the inevitable misinformation and distortion that occurs in a rehash of lies took place. For example:

The New York **Times** on Sept. 13 said: "Senator James O. Eastland . . . charged that the fund was a revival of the disbanded Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which was on the Attorney General's list of alleged subversive organizations." This, of course, is absolutely false. The SCHW was never listed.

The Chicago **Tribune** of the same day said: Dr. James A. Dombrowski, SCEF director, "refused to give the subcommittee information on contributors to the fund or how it was spent." The fact is that Dr. Dombrowski gave Eastland a copy of the treasurer's report and also the official audit by the firm of Peat, Marwick and Mitchell.

Several board members and supporters of the SCEF have written the Attorney General, the Senators from their states, and the American Legion, to protest this development. We quote from a few:

To Senator Estes Kefauver

Dear Sir:

U.S. Senator Eastland of Mississippi seems to be the moving spirit behind the petition in question. It is not always pleasant, I will admit, to impugn motives for the actions of others. But the Senator's efforts in this connection fall short of convincing when the interracial relationship in Mississippi is taken into account. It appears that Senator Eastland is more concerned with silencing the united voice of a rather militant group, raised in the cause of one standard of law for all Americans.

I am a Southern-born Negro, having lived most of my life in Tennessee, not by necessity but by choice. . . . I have no reason whatever to doubt the loyalty to their country of the men and women placed on Senator Eastland's list as subversives. I know many of them rather intimately. . . .

O. B. TAYLOR, M. D.
Knoxville, Tenn.

To Attorney General Brownell:

Dear Mr. Brownell:

I do not believe in segregation. I do believe in growth toward the ideals of a Christian democracy. When the Negro, or any minority group, is legally excluded from equal participation in the affairs of life, those responsible for such discrimination are undercutting the principles of such a democracy. **They** are the enemies of free and enlightened government.

Over the past four years I have carefully read all materials sent out from 822 Perdido Street, New Orleans. The **Southern Patriot** has championed responsible liberty. The letters and other communications that I have received have, without exception, supported freedom and defiantly opposed injustice. When the Senator Eastlands of this country are allowed to silence such voices and quench such spirits, then God help us!

JAMES ARMSTRONG,
Pastor, Methodist Church
Vero Beach, Fla.

To Senator Robert S. Kerr
copies to Mr. Seaborn Collins, National Commander of the American Legion, and Attorney General Brownell

My Dear Mr. Kerr:

One reason I wanted to call this matter to your personal attention, Mr. Kerr, is because I know of your close identity with the Young Men's Christian Assn. of Oklahoma City. I feel certain that you can believe that no YMCA board of directors would permit its personnel to identify with a communistic organization —yet, in addition to my serving on the SCEF board, W. E. Hogan, associate executive of the Southwest Area YMCA,

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Statement to Press by Dr. James A. Dombrowski

The Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc. considers it a high honor to be under attack by Senator Eastland of Mississippi.

When the Supreme Court of the United States issued its historic decision on segregation in public schools, Senator Eastland accused the Supreme Court justices of communism and demanded that the Court be investigated.

The court, he said, "had been indoctrinated and brainwashed by left-wing pressure groups". (Birmingham Post 5-28-54)

Senator Eastland attacked the Supreme Court because it condemned segregation. He is currently seeking to destroy the SCEF for the same reason.

Senator Eastland conducted a one-man hearing in New Orleans in March of 1954 ostensibly to investigate the SCEF. His methods outstripped those of Senator McCarthy in disregarding procedures of fair play and due process.

In his initial announcement, Senator Eastland indicated that he had prejudged the issue.

Senator Eastland relied chiefly on two witnesses. The first was an alumnus of Alcatraz prison, Paul Crouch, now completely discredited. The second witness, a police character named John Butler, has a record of crime and misconduct extending over twenty years.

Although officers of the SCEF, under oath, accused these two witnesses of lying, it is significant that Senator Eastland has not instituted charges of contempt or perjury. Obviously, he does not dare bring his witnesses into court where they can be subjected to cross examination.

At the conclusion of the New Orleans

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Carolina Couple Defy Race Taboo on Cottage

In Southern Pines, N. C., a Negro couple has moved into a home in a previously all-white neighborhood, and intends to stay.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin L. White, who retired from lengthy careers in government service in New York, bought the property from a white woman. The former owner seemingly sold it to spite a realtor with large holdings in the section. The Whites paid $10,000 for their bungalow.

When the realtor and others protested, the Whites put the property up for sale for $20,000, with a Sept. 15 deadline. They said: "We are not children and we are not afraid of threats. We do not want our race to feel that we were selling them down the river by offering an option, but we felt that if the neighbors objected to us so strongly, someone should be willing to pay."

The deadline passed with no takers, and now Mrs. White asserts, "We have no children, no dogs, and we do not give wild parties. We just want to live quiet lives in modest comfort. We are not looking for trouble, but anyone who wants to invite trouble can do it by crossing our fence."

Mrs. White is a native of Toledo, Ohio, where she was a policewoman and probation officer. Upon moving to New York she was counselor on the board of education and a caseworker for the Red Cross. Her husband retired in July after 35 years in the New York post office. He is a native of North Carolina.

Smear Report

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is a member, and so is Bob Childers, a member of the Houston, Tex., YMCA board of directors. . .

I strongly resent Senator Eastland and the American Legion making false claims about the Southern Conference Educational Fund, and I call upon you to urge your fellow senators to renounce this type of unfair treatment of an organization dedicated to building bridges of understanding between races, particularly in the South, where so much work is needed to make democracy equally shared by all the people.

FRANKLIN W. THOMAS,
Executive Secretary
W. L. Hutcherson Branch, YMCA
Tulsa, Okla.

We urge our readers to write the Senate Judiciary Committee for a copy of the report, with its transcript of the fantastic star-chamber proceedings in New Orleans, and then to protest to the Attorney General, their Senators, or to the American Legion Commander, Indianapolis, Indiana.

360-Plus Say Goodbye Jim Crow School!

According to the Southern Education Reporting Service, some 360 school districts and counties in the South integrated their schools last month.

The partial breakdown included: More than 80 districts in Texas, 88 districts in Oklahoma, ten counties and four large cities in Kentucky, 44 out of 55 counties in West Virginia, 144 out of 244 districts with Negro population in Missouri, seven out of 23 counties in Maryland, 21 districts in Delaware as opposed to only 10 desegregating last year.

This democratization of schools was conducted without incident, by and large, with the small community of Hoxie, Ark., being both a shameful and a proud exception. Hoxie is in the "black belt" cotton-raising sector of the state. Its schools open in July in order to permit a picking-time vacation.

Schools opened this July with integration and without incident—but then the White Councils of Mississippi saw the threat this example meant for them and they poured in filthy literature and egged on agitators from Little Rock and Hot Springs.

But the Hoxie school superintendent and the school board are standing pat. They are subjected to round-the-clock harrassment, but they dare the pro-segregationists to bring legal action.

In West Virginia, the Raleigh County board of education had voted to launch a program to complete integration at the end of a five-year period. At the last moment, the board reversed itself by a vote of 3 to 1. That one, the board president, thereupon resigned—and the Charleston, W. Va., Gazette backed his position with these words:

"Remember, in our 179-year history Supreme Court decisions have brought many, many changes—some of them with inflammatory results — but always we lived by the law and grew in stature. The problems created by past decisions are now long forgotten . . . just as the problem of integration will be forgotten in the years to come."

In Chattanooga, Tenn., where the school board had announced in July its decision to abide by the Supreme Court decision, the board chairman Harry Allen reversed himself and came out for continued segregation. Allen also urged members of the city commission "to speak out according to the dictates of their conscience in this matter." He is commissioner of health and education for the city.

Eight labor unions had filed protest against the desegregation decision, including the Chattanooga Printing Pressmen Local 165 which called it "cowardly and disloyal."

From the superintendent of schools in Washington, D. C., came data which blasts every dour prediction made about integration's effects. Dr. Hobart M. Corning told a nationwide radio audience:

More than half of the District of Columbia's teachers are Negroes; white pupils total 39 per cent.

"Private and parochial school enrollments within the District . . . have not increased to any very great extent during our first year of experience with integration.

"At the high-school level in 1953 before integration, 1.2 per cent of the high-school enrollment went over to private schools. In 1954, exactly the same percent of students went over, and that was the first year of integration.

"I have quite a number of letters on file from parents who say that, originally they were unhappy at the prospect of having a Negro teacher for their children, but now they are singing the praises of those teachers."

He said that social life at the integrated schools had "slowed down" but predicted it would pick up later.

Courageous Newspaper Marks 30th Year

The Louisiana Weekly, edited in New Orleans by C. C. DeJoie, Jr., reached its 30th year of publication last month. In every one of those years it has espoused the cause of democracy and has played a leading part in the gains the Negroes of the state achieved in recent decades. Its vigor remains undiminished with the passage of time, which is well, because there are new targets for its enterprising and courageous journalism. In Indianola, Miss., last month was spawned the first issue of a South-wide sheet sponsored by the White Citizens Councils.